Mercury & Citizen

Thursday, December 17, 2009

FREE EVERY WEEK



Rapist locked up
Mark Bates was
jailed for six years
after raping a young
woman in her own
home in July last
year



Silverstone loan
Northamptonshire
County Council has
agreed to loan £10
million to Silverstone circuit to help
with its revamp



Olympic hope
A student at Northampton School
For Boys has been
picked to be part of
the Great Britain Olympic sailing team



'Make new homes a part of community'

PLANS to build a 625 homes on the outskirts of Northampton have been given support by the borough council despite concerns it may become a "dormitory" estate.

Developer Prologis is planning to build on the 19-hectare Pineham Barns site, in West Hunsbury, which is currently used for farming.

At a Northampton Borough Council planning committee meeting on Tuesday night, no objections were raised to the proposed development provided that a robust travel plan was worked out including suitable public transport.

The final decision on the plans, which also include a restaurant, pub, fast food takeaway, small park, primary school, children's play area and outdoor sports facilities, will be made by West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC). Speaking at the meeting, Councillor Matthew Golby (Con, New Duston) said: "We need to feed back to WNDC that this development needs to be incorporated as part of the town rather than becoming a self-sufficient, dormitory place where people just stay for their immediate needs and then shoot off down the M1, with no need to come into Northampton."

Councillor Richard Church (Lib Dem, Kingsley) said: "We need to



■ Part of the 19-hectare site at Pineham Barns where it is proposed to build 625 homes plus associated infrastructure including shops and a school

learn the lessons of Grange Park where houses were built up against large sheds as I do not think that is satisfactory. I do not think that Grange Park links very well with the rest of the town."

In a letter to the committee, Councillor Paul Varnsverry ($Lib\ Dem$,

West Hunsbury) asked that concerns about peak hour traffic congestion and safety at the proposed primary school be taken into consideration.

Richard Boyt, principal planning officer for the borough council, said the houses would not be in a sustainable location but that the borough council was working with WNDC to make "the best of a bad job" and make the development more accessible.

In her report Susan Bridge, head of planning for the council, said the developers needed to improve road access, in particular the ease with which the primary school could be accessed. She said: "The layout, density, scale and amount of development shown in the parameters plan are considered broadly acceptable, although a number of improvements are needed at the masterplanning stage."

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to Northampton

FRESH from dividing the nation with their unconventional dance moves and distinctive singing X Factor stars "Jedward" have confirmed they are to visit Northampton.

The twins, John and Edward, have announced they will appear at the Lava & Ignite nightclub, in St Peter's Way, in Northampton, on December 28 from 6-10pm.

The pair, who became overnight sensations owing to their energetic performances on Saturday nights. will appear at an under-18s event where they are ex-pected to sing, meet fans and

sign autographs.
The twins have requested an extra-large performance

area for the evening.
And the nightclub's manager, Geraldine Young, says she is convinced the pair

will prove to be a big draw.

She said: "We are very excited about Jedward - we think it will be a very good event. I think out of all the contestants on the X Factor they will have longevity because they are so wacky

Admission at £10 includes entry to the club, cloakroom and all drinks. Call 01604 234965 or buy tickets online at www.ukclub.culturecom.

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Jedward coming Glory days back for The Grand?



■ The Grand Hotel in Gold Street, Northampton, will be restored to its former glory after it was revealed Travelodge was to invest £2.3million in the hotel, which is expected to re-open in the summer of next year CE picture by SHARON LUCEY

BUDGET hotel giant The job paper for the Midlands Travelodge has revealed multi-million-pound Outovary Saturday plans to restore a dilapiget you capy from you dated town centre hotel newsogent, priced £2

to its former glory. The company has announced it has completed a deal to take over The Grand Hotel in Gold Street, in the

centre of Northampton. The move will see the firm invest £2.3 million in the hotel, with the building expected

to reopen in the summer. Travelodge director, Tony O'Brien, said: "We're delighted to be opening our first hotel in the town centre in such

a fantastic location. "We want to give travellers every reason to visit Northampton and stay longer."
The company said it ex-

pects to attract business travellers visiting the town to work with major companies such as Barclays, Panasonic and Coca Cola.

It also said it expects to sellout when the British Grand Prix is held at Silverstone.
The company's move has

been welcomed by the town's leaders.

Northampton Borough Council's cabinet member for regeneration, Councillor Richard Church (Lib Dem, Kingsthorpe) said: "The Grand Hotel is a beautiful old building which has stood empty for too

"I'm glad to see Travelodge has recognised the potential of the building with a prime location in the heart of the town centre.

"It can only be good for Gold Street and good for Northampton" Northampton.

The Grand Hotel dates back to the 1890s and is a listed building. One of its most memorable

nights came in 1941, when a Stirling bomber crashed in the middle of Gold Street, clipping the building.

In 2002, plans were revealed to convert the hotel into a Walkabout Australian theme pub.

But the scheme fell through after it was opposed by the borough council.

Later plans revealed last year would have seen part of the hotel demolished and new flats built in its place.

But under the new scheme, the number of rooms in the hotel will actually be increased from 57 to 65.

The new development will also create 10 new jobs and see the ground floor of the building converted into either shops or a restaurant.

Across the country, Travelodge has almost 400 hotels and the firm plans to expand to 1,000 by 2020.

The firm currently has one hotel in Northampton, which is based in Upton Way, but it has none in the town centre.

Friday 18 December - 24 December Booking: 0871 200 2000

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 15 PENS MONDAY DECEMBER

#ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS 2: THE SQUEAKQUEL U (11.15am, 11.50am, 1.30, 2.00, 3.40, 4.10, 5.50, 6.20, 8.00 except F-Su),

(8.50 M-W only)

#AVATAR 3D 12A Contains moderat violence, threat and language 11.40am, (1.10 except **F**), 3.10, 5.00, 7.00, (8.30, 9.00 except **Th**)

#AVATAR 12A Contains mod violence, threat and language 12.30, 4.00, (7.45 except **Th**)

#ST TRINIAN'S 2: THE LEGEND OF FRITTON'S GOLD PG F: 11.00am, 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.15 Sa & Su: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.15 M-W: 11.00am, 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.15 Th: 12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7.30

WHERE THE WILD THINGS

ARE PG F-Su: 11.10am, 1.40, 4.15, 6.40 M: 11.10am, 11.20am, 1.40, 4.00, 4.15, 6.40 Tu-Th: 11.20am, 4.00 (AD) Audio Description (11.10am, 1.40, 4.15, 6.40 M only) (S) Subtitled Performances (4.15 M

THE BOX 12A Contains moderate horror and psychological threa (9.10pm **F-Su only**)

PLANET 51 U

F-Su: 12.00, 2.20, 4.40 M-Th: 1.45,

(10.00am Sa only) ALIENS IN THE ATTIC PG

(7.15 F-Su only), (9.30 except Th)

THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON 12A Contains moderate fan

(11.50am, 2.50, 6.00 F-Su only), (9.20 except Th)

DISNEY'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN DISNEY DIGITAL 3D PG Digital Presentation

(11.00am except **Sa-Su**), 1.20, 3.50, 6.10

(AD) Audio Description (11.00am Tu only)
(S) Subtitled Performances (11.00am Tu

MOVIES FOR JUNIORS (£1) G-FORCE PG (10.00am Sa-Su only)

THE SANTA CLAUSE 3: THE ESCAPE CLAUSE U

LAW ABIDING CITIZEN 18 (9.30 except Th)

11.20am, 1.50, 4.20, 6.50

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Festive TV misery at 700 homes

HUNDREDS of homes in Northampton face a TV blackout this Christmas after a cable provider cut off their terrestrial TV reception, even though the official analogue switch-off is not due until 2011.

About 700 households are affected. Among them are grandparents Terry and Joyce Tebbutt, from Kingsthorpe, who switched on their TV last week to find the five terrestrial channels had suddenly stopped working, leaving them to watch only a message from Virgin Media telling

them their analogue service had ceased.

Mr Tebbutt, aged 82, said: "I called Virgin and they said: 'We're terribly sorry, we'll send you a new digital box.' I said thank you and asked when that would be

and they replied: 'January 5'. "I was completely bamboozled by it and I was just boiling to say something. Normally we'd be watching the big Christmas film or my wife would watch the Strictly Come Dancing final but not this year. Now we either wait until January to watch television again or pay up to £200 for a new aerial and we can't afford to do that, par-

ticularly before Christmas."

Virgin admitted to the *Chron* that the problem had affected about 700 households across the town but insisted customers were sent a letter in September warning them of the switch-off.

Although some viewers could reconnect to their traditional outdoor rooftop aerial, many people, including the Tebbutts, got rid of theirs when they were sold on the benefits of cable television.

Marie Forsyth, from St James, said her home had suffered the same problem, with a message telling viewers to sub-

scribe to a digital service. She said: "Luckily we also have Sky but I can imagine those people who can't afford Sky are not very happy

"The official analogue turn-off isn't due to happen until 2011 and we hadn't been warned this was going to happen.'

A spokesman for Virgin told the *Chron* "The decision to switch off our analogue



■ There will be no television for Terry Tebbutt this Christmas after Virgin Me dia turned off their analogue service

TV service in the Northampton area has not been taken lightly. The reason we are making these changes now is because there are only a small amount of customers who receive their TV services via our analogue network and they already have the cabling they need to take digital TV."

A dream come true

A CHILDHOOD dream has come true for a Northampton teenager after she was offered a contract to work for one of London's top modelling agen-

At a towering 5ft 11in and a dress size of six to eight, Nyasha Maton-hodze (pictured), aged 15, of Wakes Meadow, fits the bill perfectly for an international catwalk model.

After watching the television programme, America's Next Top Model, Nyasha persuaded her mother Theresa Musanu, aged 33, to go to London to see what the Elite agency had to offer.

Nyasha, a student at Northamp-ton's Unity College, won the Elite Model Look for London UK and has now been signed up to the agency, which has hired a string of world famous names including Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Gisele Bun-

Nyasha said: "I'm absolutely over-joyed. This is like a dream."







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ATOPBritishdramacritichasdescribed the Royal & Derngate as one of the most exciting regional theatres of the past

Writing in his review of the past 10 years in *The Guardian*, Michael Billington, said the Northampton theatre had been "aggressively daring" in its choice of productions. He said he was particularly impressed

with recent adaptations of Shakespeare performed at the theatre as well as a series of plays by Alan Ayckbourn and the Young America season.

He wrote: "Most exciting regional

theatre is the Royal & Derngate North-

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with aggressively daring productions of Othello and Hamlet; now under Laurie Sansom, with a rich Ayckbourn season and a pairing of rare plays by Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill.

In response to the accolade from *The* Guardian, Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive at Royal & Derngate, said everyone at the theatre was "delight-

He said: "Reputations are not built overnight, and this is the culmination of hard work and a strong creative vision by successive teams here in Northampton.

iobs today

The job paper for the Midlands

Top critic impressed Warning over top Britishdramacritichasdescribed ampton. First under Rupert Goold, First under Rupert Goold, First under Rupert Goold, First under Rupert Goold, Fi sales parking

BOXING Day bargain hunters are being warned that traffic wardens will be out and about in Northampton fining motorists who fail to pay for a ticket.

Bank holiday parking is always free in Northampton, but for the first time in years, Boxing Day falls on a Saturday and it will be business as usual for parking enforcement officers on duty that day and ready to hand out an unwanted Christmas present.

Manager of the Grosvenor Centre, Sheridan New, said: "This year we are open 9am to 5.30pm, with most of our shops open for

"Normally when it is a bank holiday we would open from 10.30am to 4.30pm, but this year we are open all day.



■ It will be business as normal for traffic wardens on Boxing Day

"In my view I am sure a more lenient approach should be taken because there is bound to be some confusion, I hope there will be a

solution so people know what they are doing.

Northamptonshire County Council, which runs parking enforcement in the town, confirmed normal Saturday on-street parking charges would apply on Boxing Day.

The TRO states that onstreet parking charges apply on all days between the hours of 8am and 6pm with the exception of Sundays, bank holidays and Christ-

mas Day.

Over the festive period there will be free on-street parking on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 27 and on the Bank Holiday, Monday, December 28.

Parking charges will not apply on New Year's Day, which is also a bank holiday and normal parking restrictions will also apply to permit

A spokesman for Northampton-shire County Council said: "This warning will give advance notice to shoppers so they can avoid receiving penalty charge notices for not purchasing a pay and display ticket on Boxing Day."

Meanwhile staff in some stores in Northampton will be preparing for an early start on Boxing Day morning with some stores opening for business as early as 7am.

Debenhams in the Drapery and Next in Peacock Place will be opening their doors to shoppers long before dawn.

Debenhams will open from 7am to 7pm, Next will also open their doors from 7am and will be selling off stock with 50 per or less on all sale products.

Elsewhere, the day after Christmas is likely to be a busy one on Northampton's retail parks with many of the big stores opening up for the Christmas sales.

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Captain opens centre

COBBLERS' captain Craig Hinton cut the ribbon to open new facilities at a day centre and home for people with behavioural difficulties.

Northampton

defender opened an activity room for the Mentaur company at its Stoke House centre in Kingsthorpe, which is a specialist challenging behaviour unit for its clients.



northamptonchron.co.uk Mercury & Citizen, Thursday, Decen









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- How Connexions helps?

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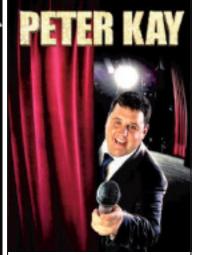
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Safety promise follows petition

■ Work is expected to be completed before spring on making the A45 safety near Wootton and East Hunsbury





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SAFETY measures will be built along the A45 in Northampton before next spring, after campaigners launched a petition following the death of schoolgirl Sophie Bywaters.

Sophie, aged 13, was knocked down and killed while trying to walk across the busy dual carriageway in October.

Since then, Gemma Whitlock, who was herself badly injured on the road when she was seven, has collected more than 2,000 signatures on a petition pressing the Highways Agency for safety along the road to be improved.

This week she received a letter from the authority confirming two-metre high partitions would be installed along a 1km stretch of the A45, between the Queen Eleanor roundabout and the Wootton Fields flyover.

Mrs Whitlock, aged 30, said: "I am really pleased the Highways Agency has decided to do something about this road.

"I've worked really hard on getting this done so it's brilliant to get a result. Hopefully the road will be much safer in the future."

Mrs Whitlock and her husband, Michael, consulted Sophie's family before spending two weeks knocking on doors in Wootton and East Hunsbury gathering support.

Sophie's mum Teresa said: "It is great news but it has come far too late and this is a problem which should not have been ignored for so long.

"We know people are still trying to walk over the A45, and as recently as Sunday a woman was knocked over on the Queen Eleanor roundabout.

"It is about time the Highways Agency accepted this work needs to be carried out urgently.

"So far, they have failed us by failing to make the A45 safe."

In a letter to Mrs Whitlock, the agency confirmed partitions would be installed within this financial year, and added a permanent footbridge was still a possibil-

Chairman of Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council, Jonathan Nunn, said: "We will be keeping up the pressure on the Highways Agency, but this is welcome news for the people of Wootton and East Hunsbury."

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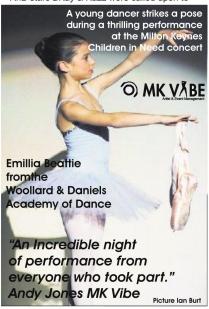
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Milton Keynes Talent Shines at Children in Need Extravaganza

The Chrysalis Theatre in Willen witnessed a truly unique evening of entertainment on Friday. The packed house was treated to the most diverse show Milton Keynes has ever seen. As with all memorable productions the beginning of the show had it's moments of high drama. Gremlins in the sound booth meant that local RnB stars BKay & Kazz were called upon to



treat the audience to an a cappella rendition of their opening track 'My Girl'. By the time the sound was restored the the show was well under way and the two brothers had the audience rocking with their unique brand of Motown magic. Amazing dance performances from hip hop street company Sleek included an outstanding routine to Michael Jackson's Thriller, with full zombie costumes. Natalie Chua effortly hit the high notes with a moving rendition of Nessun Dorma, then had the audience spellbound with a stunning version of Angel which featured a faultless display from The Woollard and Daniels Academy of Dance. The ballet school performed a number of special pieces which featured dancers from every section of the academy. The audience were treated to an incredible mixture of quality dance performances and costumes from some of the most gifted young dancers in the region. Sahara Cee twice won the hearts of the audience with her incredible vocals one a duet with Kazz. Flaunt were at their energetic best, bringing the unique sense of fun and enjoyment to their dance performances that has made them a firm favourite all over the city. Although the stage was brimming with entertainment and talent, the audience were even treated to a gospel choir in the foyer during the break. Fusion, who are fast establishing themselves as one of the premiere vocal groups in the UK gave a flawless performance whilst Pudsey was on hand to be photographed with the youngsters. The show had many outstanding performances, though special mention has to got to Evolution, a 30 strong contemporary choir who had the audience dancing in the isles and provided backing to Natalie Chua for an enchanting version of the hit single 'Run'. The concert and performances leading up to the event raised over £3000 for children in Need and was an amazing night for all involved.



Police Initiative Closes the door on thieves



A police initiative has been launched to create a logo for home owners to easily identify products that meet the very highest possible standards in security, offering peace of mind and a real barrier to the opportunist thief.

The Secured by Design initiative has been taken up by door manufacturers to ensure that locks, glass, framework and door leaf offer a home the very best protection. Home owners can ensure they have no unwelcome guests.



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Births

Births

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Verity & Richard

Are delighted to

announce the Birth

of their gorgeous

baby Son

Eden Robert

On 1st December

2009.

A little Brother

for Toby

1st Birthday

Happy Birthday

18th Birthday

Family Announcements

21st Birthday

Congratulations

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

BEDWELL -LECKY

Congratulations James and Angi on the Birth of your Daughter

Aimee Olivia

Our first Grandchild. Lots of love Mum and Dad Lecky

BEDWELL -

LECKY

Aimee

Well done Angi

God bless you all.

Lots of love

Nan and Pap Lecky

BEDWELL -

LECKY

Congratulations James and Angi

on the Birth of your Daughter

Aimee

My first Great

Love Pap Trev



BUCKINGHAM Verity and Richard

Congratulations on the arrival of a beautiful baby boy Eden Robert

Born 1st December 2009. Thank you James and Angela for our With all our love to Great Granddaughter you from Mum, Grannie, Natasha. David and Charlie.



GOODING -McDONALD

Simon & Amy are pleased to announce the arrival of

Jake Andrew

Born 5th December With love and best wishes from both families



BROWETT

Lots of love Mum and Dad A

Emily Katie May

Born 26th

November 2009



BROWETT

Laura & Neil IT'S A BOY are proud to PARKINSON/ announce the

COOGAN birth of their Oliver would like to precious announce the arrival Baby Girl of his baby brother

Joshua George born 22/11/09. weighing 10lbs 8oz. A lovely Grandson for John, Maureen and Rosemarie Steve and Tracey

are delighted.



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FAMILY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Birthdays

Shirley

BULL

Happy 75th Birthday to

the best Wife. Mum and

Nan in the world!

With love from

Happy Birthday



ISHERWOOD

Happy 18th Birthday Love from Mum, Colin and all your family

Tara - Ann

WILLIAMS

Congratulations on

your 18th Birthday.

We are so proud of

the young adult

Have a lovely day.

Love you always.

Mum, Graham, Emily

and all the family, xxxx



Anthony **ADNITT**

Congratulations on your

21st Birthday

Love and best wishes. Mum and Dad

40th Birthday

Sarah

COLLETT

(Nee Barrett)

Have a great Birthday

Sarah!

Lots of Love

Mum, Dad, Chris, Juliet

& Kyle xx

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday

Selena **HEWITT**

Congratulations on passing your Masters degree, lots of love. Your very proud Auntie Sally, Chris, Jamie, Kim, Melissa, Gaz & Billy-Rae



BIRCH

"Birchy" We miss you loads mate, thinking of you and your Family all the time. A true Hero to evervone

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BIRCH

Marc

DALBY In Memoriam **Ernie**

My sincere thanks to all, for the visits, cards, letters, calls, cards, letters, calls, flowers, help and offers of help that I have received since Ernie's death; also to all those who attended his funeral and gave him such a wonderful send-off. Pam Dalby

Marc Birch Cpl R.M

close your eyes, Or hear your last faint

sigh. A knock on the door to say you'd gone, No way to say

hearts can mend Our eternal love to you we send.

Remembered



BIRCH

Marc
One year gone Marc,
cannot believe it yet.
You have left a

massive hole in my life, That no one else could ever fill. I love and miss you Big Brother. Paul, Oliver and Lotty x x x

7 **CHAMBERS** Ray (Chab)

11/11/51- 13/12/92 Always in our hearts With love from Yvonne, Karen, Andy, Joe and Partners. Good Night God Bless.

DEACON

John 16.12.06

Three years have passed, you're always with us in our

hearts and we know

you're watching over

Never forgotten

Kathy, Adrian, Natalie, Shaun

& Amy

EATON

Gordon

12-12-02

Husband.

Father & Pappy

Living on in our hearts

with love Shirl, Mark,

Kelly, Steve & Bub -x

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In Memoriam

BIRCH

Marc 'Birchy

Precious memories of Marc Taken from his dear Wife and family whilst on tour of duty with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan 12th December 2008

Totally dedicated boot-neck Marine Respected by his comrades Lived life to the full In his short life

He left a lot of cherished memories

Loved his Wife and family Left a massive void in all our life's

From a proud and sad Father-in-law Phil

To advertise

telephone

us everyday

STAFFORD — Irene

Passed away December 2003. Forever in our hearts, Miss you Mum.

Children and C Grand Children xx

WOOD

Birthday Memories

Sadly missed From Ray.

WAKE — Wendy. Much loved Wife. Sadly missed. Forever in my thoughts. From Ray.

Chronicle

YOUR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS CALL OUR

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

INFORMATION

Congratulations Laura & Neil on the safe arrival of your Beautiful Daughter

Emily





McEwan

Rob and Sophie, would like to announce the safe arrival of Maxwell Peter McEwan, Born on Wednesday 25th November 2009 weighing 7lbs 6oz



Maxwell

You're beautiful.



HARRIS 17 Today!

Нарру Birthday

EMMA

Love always Mum, Martyn and losh

13th Birthday



Amy

Teenager now! Happy 13th Birthday Have a great day Love Mum. Dad. Emily & Sean



DOHERTY



Chris



MUDDIMAN

Jason Happy birthday to a

wonderful Dad, Son, Brother & Uncle Life begins at 40 so enjoy! We're all so proud of you. "Up the Gunners" Love from the Muds & Massey's xxxx

Chris

Happy special birthday You're a great Dad, Love ya! Jade, Josh, Syd

Jamie, Kim, Melissa, Gaz, Billy-Rae xx

Chrisy bot bot Happy 50th Birthday my gorgeous soul mate one more surprise to



50th Birthday

BOTTERILL

BOTTERILL

go hee hee!

From Sally $x \times x$



Dearest Grandson of Mary and the late Reg. Died tragically on the 12th of December 2008 serving His country. A true Hero. Loved and remembered every day, God Bless Love Nan XXX

In Memoriam

K.I.A December 12th 2008. We did not see you

goodbye. No one will ever know our pain. Never to hear you utter Mum or Dad again. No one our broken

Thank you for 26 precious years. So proud Marc.

BIRCH Marc John "Our Godson"

Your presence we miss Your memory we treasure Loving you always Forgetting you never

"Our Hero" Love you Uncle Rob,

Auntie Caroline Jason, Emily, Ashley and Dani X X X

Anthony (Tony) 12th December 2005 Much loved Husband of Gillian.

HAYNES

May the winds of time blow softly And whisper for you to hear That I still love and miss you That I still love and miss you As it dawns another year I think about you often I talk about you too I know I have my memories memories
But I wish I still
had you.
Love you always
Gilly x

HAYNES Anthony "Tony"

As time unfolds As time untilds another year Memories keep you ever near Still greatly missed but lovingly remembered With love

PRICE Michael Leslie Passed away 16th December 2008

Forever in our thoughts, miss you Mick Love Irene, Ray

& families x

Love 1 Children,

Bill (Willie)

14th December 2004.
My loving Husband.
Five years have
passed. Love and miss
you everyday still but
happy memories are
always there.
All the family and
friends keep me going
until we meet again.
All my love Sylvia
x x

STENT — Michael. Forever in my thoughts

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Bailiff's Certificate.

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Supermini that's worth drivers taking a punt

lat is looking to keep its Punto on terms with the supermini class leaders with the latest Evo version.

Evolution and its stockier associate 'Evo' usually spell serious pace and sporting intent when tagged onto the end of a car's name. The BMW M3 Evolution, Lancia Delta Integrale Evolution and various Mitsubishi Lancer Evo models have all been high performance highlights of their day.

The Fiat Punto Evo isn't. At this point, interest levels will be falling among track day fans and schoolboys with a poster vacancy next to the Bugatti Veyron on their bedroom walls, but motorists who fancy buying into Fiat's long history of fun, affordable small cars should be paying closer attention.

Fiat's naming strategy where its Punto supermini is concerned can be less than transparent. We'd just got used to calling the car the Grande Punto under the Italian marque's insistence. Now, following a reasonably thorough facelift, we're expected to drop that and refer to it as the Punto Evo. The Grande Punto continues as a budget alternative to the Evo, so it's not as Grande as it once was.

The contents of the Punto Evo's engine bay could be its strongest suit. The powerplants are compact but the range-topping units make up for any lack of capacity with some cutting edge technology. The 1.2-litre and 1.4-litre 8-valve petrol engines are reasonably solid and contribute to the Punto Evo's attractive upfront pricing. They develop 65 and 77bhp respectively but for a fully rounded and capable Punto Evo, it's far better to spend a little extra on one of the more advanced powerplants.

The 1.4-litre MultiAir engine is a highlight of the Punto Evo range. It's available



in 105bhp guise or with 135bhp thanks to the addition of a turbocharger. The clever bit is the MultiAir's electrohydraulic valve management system that works to optimise the amounts of air entering the combustion system by controlling the engine intake valves independently of the throttle. The result is improvements in performance and economy

Fiat Punto Evo

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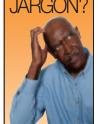
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www.tresham.ac.uk/recruitment









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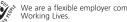
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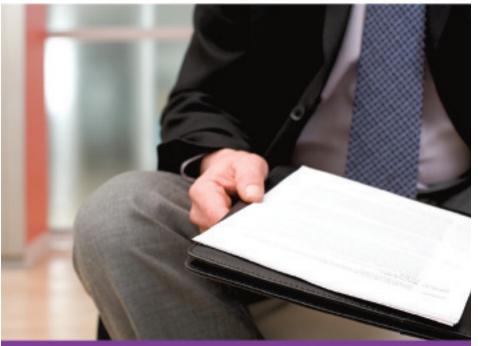
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Sport

The past week in headlines

At-a-glance sport from the Chronicle & Echo

Flash Ash

Jim Mallinder hailed Saints winger Chris Ashton as one of the best finishers in rugby after his two tirs against Treviso



Rico's boost

Former Cobbler Marc Richards helped Port Vale to a 1-1 draw at Sixfields, but tipped Ian Sampson to be a hit as manager



Perfect Neptunes

Northampton basketball team the Neptunes maintained their great start to the season with their ninth win



Sundays are still special to Murray

SAINTS could be without world-class prop Euan Murray for the final two Heineken Cup group games after his decision not to play on Sundays.

The devout Christian has decided he can no longer play on the Sabbath, and that could mean Saints being without Murray for the home clash with Perpignan and the trip to Munster.

Both games' dates have yet to be finalised by the ERC, but the demands of *Sky Sports* could easily see the vital pool one matches moved to Sundays. Saints' Heineken Cup clash with Perpignan is set for Januray 15, 16 or Sunday 17 and their pool finale against Munster could be on January 22, 23 or Sunday 24. And if Saints get through to the quarter-finals of Europe's top club competition, that could be moved to a Sunday as well.

Saints have no games scheduled for Sundays in the Guinness Premiership for the rest of the season, but Jim Mallinder's men are handily placed in the top four and if they reach the play-offs, one of the semi-finals will be played on a Sunday.

It is understood Murray has been in consulta-tion with the club's chaplain Reverand Jim Win-ning about the decision not to play on Sundays.

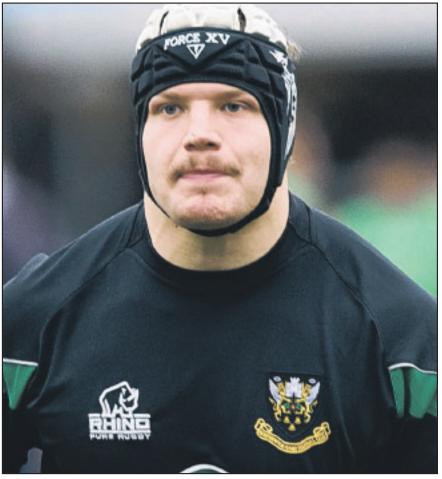
Winning was refusing to comment yesterday along with the club and Murray, but the player's decision has also ruled the 29-year-old out of Scotland's opening Six Nations clash with France, which falls on a Sunday.

A Scotland Rugby Union statement said: "Head coach Andy Robinson has been in discussions with Euan for a number of months and is aware of Euan's desire to not play on Sundays. We very much respect Euan's wishes and support him. Euan continues to be a valuable member of the

Murray's Christian faith intensified after nearly dying on the pitch in 2005, when he was knocked out and went into a seizure playing for Glasgow.

The British Lion, who is a member of Reynard Way Evangelical Church in Obelisk Rise, has played on Sundays in the past for Saints and Scotland, but he admitted this year that playing on God's day of rest troubled his conscience.

Saints, 30-18 winners over Treviso in the Heineken Cup at Franklin;s Gardens last weekend, play the reverse fixture in Italy on Saturday.



■ KEEPING SUNDAY SPECIAL - the deeply religious Saints player Euan Murray has declared he will no longer play rugby on Sundays

Curtis is up for Darlo trip

JOHN CURTIS has urged the Cobblers to adopt a professional approach when they play Coca-Cola League Two whipping boys Darlington on Saturday.

Despite having failed to win a league game since October 24, Town head to the north-east as favourites for a game against a Quakers side on an abysmal run of form.

At the weekend they were thrashed 5-0 at Torquay, and have recently recorded 4-0 defeats to Notts County and Morecambe as well as a 5-2 loss at Chesterfield.

It is a record that has left them rock bottom of the Football League, 11 points off safety and staring rel-egation to the Blue Square Premier firmly in the face.

Curtis, who will be in midfield for the final game before Christmas, says the team will be nothing less than professional in a match they must surely win.

And he also says he has no concerns about playing in a 'ghost town ground' – Darlington's average gate this season is 2,029, in a stadium that holds 25,000.

'We don't treat any game differently to any other we play," he said. "We've got to go up there, be professional, and make sure we get the three points.

"I've got quite a lot of experience of playing in stadiums that are halfempty so I should be okay. I've played a lot of games for reserve teams in front of stands with nobody in them so it won't be a problem for me.

"It doesn't really make any difference to me to be honest. Good professional footballers should be able to shut the fans out anyway.

"We won't let the supporters influence how we play up there, we'll go and do a job and get the win.

The injury situation at Sixfields mean the team is unlikely to change too much from the one that drew 1-1 with Port Vale on Saturday, which should mean another game for Joe Benjam, with the 19-year-old enjoying a decent game on the left of midfield.